

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-8 and 10-15 are pending in the present application. Claim 9 and 16-21 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, and Claims 1, 6-8, 10 and 15 are amended by the present amendment.

In the Office Action, Claims 1-5, 10-14 and 16-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,649,218 to Saito in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,526,410 to Aoyama et al. (herein "Aoyama") and U.S. Patent No. 6,330,574 to Murashita; Claims 6-8, 15, 17-19 and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,535,875 to Takahashi et al. (herein "Takahashi") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,230,173 to Ferrel et al. (herein "Ferrel") and Murashita. Applicants respectfully traverse those rejections.

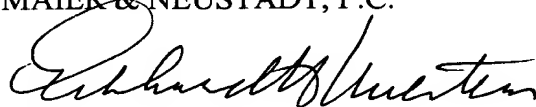
Applicants and applicant's representative gratefully acknowledge the courtesy of a personal interview with Examiner Nguyen on March 21, 2005 and a telephone interview on April 1, 2005. During the interviews, rejections in the Office Action and differences between references cited in the Office Action and the claimed invention were discussed. In particular, the Examiner indicated that independent Claims 1, 6-8, 10 and 15 would patentably define over all cited references and would be placed in condition for allowance if amended to include features similar to those recited in Claims 16-21. Accordingly, Claims 1, 6-8, 10 and 15 are amended to recite features similar to those of Claims 16-21, respectively, and Claims 16-21 are canceled.

Hence, it is respectfully submitted that independent Claims 1, 6-8, 10 and 15, and claims depending therefrom, are allowable.

Consequently, in light of the above discussion and in view of the present amendment, the present application is believed to be in condition for allowance and an early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.



Eckhard H. Kuesters
Registration No. 28,870

Customer Number
22850

Tel: (703) 413-3000
Fax: (703) 413 -2220
(OSMMN 06/04)

EHK:ZSS:dnf

I:\ATTY\ZS\19's\192432US\192432AMEND 031805.DOC